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THE
CANARY BIRD.







*The Canary Bird giving an account of himself
the feathered Congress.*

J. Scott sculp.

See page 19.

Published Nov. 10. 1788. by E. Newbery, corner of St. Pauls.

THE
CANARY BIRD:

A MORAL FICTION. K

INTERSPERSED WITH

POETRY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE SPARROW, KEEPER'S TRAVELS,
THE CRESTED WREN, &c.

"Tho' low the subject, it deserves our pains."

London:

PRINTED FOR E. NEWBERRY,
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

By J. Cundee, Ivy Lane.

1799.

THE
CANARY BIRD

A MORAL & POLITICAL

POETRY



PRINTED BY

W. B. E. & CO. LTD.

10, ABINGDON ROAD, LONDON, E.C. 4

1911

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Subject of this Volume is the Escape of a Canary-Bird from his Cage : — the Design — to present to young Readers a little Miscellany of Natural History, Moral Precept, Sentiment and Narrative.

CONVICTS

THE subject of this volume is
the Escape of a Convict from his
Gaol—the District—his parent is
young Robert a little boy of
Fifteen years, Michael Francis, son
of John and Mary.

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CHAP. XVII

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NOTE

The Death of Kipper



THE
CANARY - BIRD.

CHAP. I.

His plumes the beauties of the king-cup show,
Mixed with the whiteness of descending snow;
His glossy wings delightfully unfold,
Like evening clouds bestreaked with liquid gold;
Smooth on his breast the downy feathers lay,
No down so smooth, no fleece so soft as they;
More sweet, more various, are his pleasing strains
Than rising flowers that deck untrodden plains,

ANON.

MIRA's Canary-Bird has left
his cage: let us amuse ourselves,
Melanthe, by imagining his ad-
ventures. If we look but for an
hour on nature, the sweet sight
will improve our understandings,
and our hearts !

B

It

It *will* be looking on nature, for the most part, for he has fled, at once, among those flowers and thickets: and though he has never, till now, known liberty, never perched upon a tree, nor travelled through the spirit-cheering air, yet, believe me, he feels no embarrassment on taking possession of these new and captivating blessings. Some giddiness, I grant, some intoxication of pleasure, may attend the golden runaway's progress; some perplexity, too, may occur, as to which delightful object his first visit shall be paid.

As

As he was bred in England, he knows not how much a foreigner he is; his ignorance upon this subject may lead him into some blunders. I see him attempting, methinks, to claim acquaintance with that yellow-hammer which has alighted near him. The mistake is not unnatural — they nearly resemble each other, though the wild bird is the larger — for Mira's bird is of mottled feather, such as connoisseurs esteem. He sings, and I can guess the meaning of his lay : noon is near ; he asks the linnet, for company-sake, to lead him to a cool asylum ;—as thus :

THE CANARY-BIRD.

I.

Inhabitant of this fair scene,
O, guide a stranger bird along,
To some deep and shady glen,
Dear to peace and dear to song!

II.

There, while the sun's full glory reigns,
Ripening sweet fruits and mealy seeds,
Let us in gay and grateful strains,
Praise the power that warms and feeds!



CHAP. II.

Innumerable songsters, in the fresh'ning shade
— their modulations mix
Mellifluous.

THOMSON.

YOU need not be apprehensive, my dear Melanthe, about the bird's subsistence. His excursion having happened in the finest days of summer, he will suffer neither from hunger nor cold : and, depend upon it, stranger as he is to the fields, he will be housed before to-morrow. If you have comforted yourself

B 3

upon

upon that point, I shall continue my story.

Having eluded all our search, he is gone in quiet, no doubt, with the yellow-hammer; and I must suppose that he has been introduced to the tenants of yonder grove. The stranger excites general curiosity. From over-hanging boughs, and from all sides, linnets,- chaffinches, black - caps, sparrows, wrens, red-breasts, cast upon him an inquiring eye. The yellow-hammer is taken to task: "Who is this! Who is this!" resounds from a hundred bills.

Though

THE CANARY-BIRD.

Though I am a great friend to the feathered people, I cannot take upon me to defend their behaviour upon this occasion. I have too much friendship for good manners to do so. The poor Canary-Bird is quite abashed! so, on entering a new school, the trembling scholar is led through the room, while every eye is fixed upon his face, and every tongue, in a low whisper, utters some remark. The novelty of the place, the almost preternatural silence, and the general inquisition under which he passes, terrify his spirits, cover his cheeks with crimson, cast

cast down his head, and faulter his step. In this uncomfortable situation is the Canary-Bird placed.

The yellow-hammer relates to the assembly that, he met with this bird upon an adjacent tree ; that he found him in a state of much perturbation, of which he had never taken the liberty to inquire the cause ; but that, the elegance of his manners, and the charms of his voice, had induced him to pay every attention, and to behave to him as a friend.

The Canary-Bird having recovered himself a little from his

confusion, endeavoured by the following words, to satisfy the curiosity he had excited.

“ I assure you, sweet friends, that I am almost as unacquainted with my own situation as yourselves; if you will permit me to relate the little I know, you will perhaps discover what and who, I am; and you may assist me in unravelling the mystery of my condition. If you ask me whence I came, I can only say that, as I believe, I have been all my life in this neighbourhood. But, instead of roving at large as you do, and as I have done to day, with
infinite

infinite pleasure,—pray give me leave to ask you one question—Is to day some great holiday, on which you all come out into this ample place, and so pass the rest of your lives in a cage not large enough for a bundle of ground-sel?”

The whole assembly burst into a loud laugh. The Canary-Bird asked this question with earnestness, and very gravely: for he thought that he had, just then, discovered the riddle of his life: but, with abominable rudeness, every bird fell a-laughing.

The distress of our adventurer upon this occasion may be very easily

easily imagined. At length, the yellow-hammer, who had himself stooped to pick his feathers, in order to avoid joining the laugh, relieved him by answering that, they passed every day in as large a space as they could form any idea of: they knew no bounds.

“ I beg pardon,” continued the Canary, “ for troubling you with a question which appears to you so absurd; but, really, for myself, I have always lived in a cage: and by what singular good fortune it is that I have this day a range so extensive, I am unable to say. I was bred
in

in a cage—larger, indeed than to which I have been since confined—and, being separated from my parents, I have lived, ever since, alone.”

Here the Canary-Bird, pausing, though he had not finished his story, a black-cap made some observations in reply:

“ Upon my honor, this is the most extraordinary case that ever came within my knowledge. I know that very various are the modes of life to which different birds are accustomed; but I never yet heard of any one that led such a one as you describe;

cribe; and least of all, beautiful stranger, ought you to be confined to a single spot, or in any way secluded from the sight of the world. What astonishes me, however, more than all the rest, is the consideration of how, so shut up, you have been able to find subsistence. Do you feed upon the air that visits your abode?"

"You have good reason to suspect," returned the Canary-Bird, "that a life so unusual as mine, is supported by means as uncommon. As I am unacquainted with your food, I cannot make any comparison;
c but

but I have always had plenty of a mixture of black and yellow seeds, and a well of water. Pray who brings you your food?"

Here the birds stared—in short, never did a conversation happen where the parties found more difficulty in understanding each other.

It happened, however, that, there was present a goldfinch, who, once in his life, lived in a cage. "My good friend," said he, "I ought to have come to your assistance before now: but I could not recover myself from the merriment with which your first question inspired me. I will

will undertake to explain to this audience some of the points that puzzles it.

The intervention of the goldfinch was not more useful to the assembly than to the Canary-Bird: the latter now discovered that, the manner in which he had lived was the consequence of accident, rather than of any peculiarity in his nature.

By this time, the agitation which had been caused by the visit of the Canary-Bird was in some measure abated. Their eager attention was greatly withdrawn. The Canary-Bird began to see the real manners of

the birds, which afforded him real delight. He was particularly pleased with the various rustic songs that were sung by his cheerful companions—that of a linnet was among the prettiest—though wild and unconnected enough, as you may suppose.

I.

Sweet, sweet, o'er flowery heaths to roam,
And find in every bower a home;
Sweet through woods, at noon, to stray,
And careless sing the cheerful lay!

II.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, the green retreat,
And sweet the sunny mountain,
Dewy meadows, O, how sweet!
And sweet the glittering fountain
Sweet, sweet, sweet!

III.

Sweet with the morning breeze to fly,
When first the lark ascends the sky!
Sweet in the stream to sip and bathe!
Sweet the fragrant air to breathe!
Sweet, sweet!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A state in which our hero's bliss stood still :
The good enjoyed without the fear of ill.

ALTERED FROM POPE.

THE heat of the sun having abated the birds left their covert, in search of an evening's repast. The Canary-Bird and his friend went out on the same errand. The stranger was shewn great variety of entertainment: he was

c 3 taken

taken first to new-ploughed grounds, where food presented itself in abundance. Here, he met with *grey-larks*, whose colour resembles the earth so nearly that, you may walk very close without being able to perceive them. I have seen a dog hunt them over a field by the ear only, and pass by those that were silent without discovering them in a single instance: and, what is more remarkable, these birds, relying on the protection which their colour affords, will permit you to approach within a very small distance, before they move.

As

As the food which was in so great plenty on the ploughed fields consisted chiefly of insects, it was of a sort to which the Canary-Bird had been wholly unaccustomed; the yellow-hammer, therefore, conducted him next to some fallow-land, where a variety of plants produced the most exquisite grains.

While they were enjoying themselves on this fruitful spot, the yellow-hammer enquired of the Canary in what manner he had been used to pass his days?

“In the morning,” replied the Canary-Bird, “on the opening of the window-shutters, a sudden
burst

burst of light succeeds to total darkness: this event always fills me with gaiety, which I proclaim by my songs. An hour or two having elapsed, a young lady, who is indeed my sovereign, my guardian, and my only companion, enters the room, and, generally, comes to my cage. To this lady's care I am indebted for food and water. She always says she loves me; and I love her, and tell her so in many a song. Sometimes, too, she brings me plants like these, which I pull through the wires of my cage, and nibble. She gives me sugar, and egg; and offers

offers me, beside, many things that I know not how to eat. She sits down to the harpsichord—and I spend the morning, very frequently, in emulating her voice. This I cannot do—but the *attempt* has considerably improved my own. We cannot all reach excellence; but if we try to do so, we shall approach much nearer than if we make no effort.

“In the evening, when the light of day seems declining, a new radiance is displayed. Candles are lit, and I am much admired for resuming my songs. After some time, this new light,
in

in its turn disappears: not gradually, like the sun, but in an instant, profound darkness succeeds, and I sleep. I believe that I have now told you the history of my life: the history of one day is that of all. What I have heard and seen, would, indeed, make a copious narrative: but I speak of what regards myself, personally, and of that only. —I should like to hear how the time passes with you and all the other birds, who live in a manner so different.”

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

To them nor stores, nor granaries belong ;
Nought but the woodland and the pleasing song ;
Yet your kind heavenly father bends his eye
On the least wing that flits along the sky
To him they sing, when spring renews the plain, }
To him they cry in winter's pinching reign ; }
Nor is their music, nor their plaint, in vain :
He hears the gay, and the distressful, call,
And with unceasing bounty fills them all.

THOMSON.

“ IF, as I understand you” replied the yellow-hammer, “ your life experiences no variation in any part of the year, ours is very different, indeed. The habits to which different birds are accustomed

tomed vary in so essential particulars from each other, that I cannot attempt to give the comprehensive information which your question seems to require: but I will describe to you, in a general way, the life that we enjoy.

“ In the morning, a little after sun-rise, we fly abroad in quest of food. Nothing can exceed our delight at the return of day; and, like you, we express our pleasure in songs. At this time, the voices of ten thousand birds resound from the heaths, the woods, the fields, the leas, and the banks of silver streams: the sky

sky-lark, rising perpendicularly into the air, sings a delightful song which is heard when he himself is out of sight: the wood-pecker makes a sort of loud and hearty laugh: the swallow sweeps over the surface of the ground and water, twittering in sweet tones; or, sometimes, by a shrill alarm, bids his companions be aware that the hawk is at hand: the hawk is a bird of prey, whose notes much resemble those of our king, the eagle: rooks sometimes dive and tumble in a frolicksome manner in their flight, and attempt, in the gaiety of their
D hearts

hearts, to sing; but with no great success*. It were endless to name all the various tribes of birds — to-morrow morning you will yourself behold the scene of which I am speaking. We ramble from one place to another till noon—then, scarcely a bird is to be seen abroad—every one seeks shelter in the shade, and there, his hunger and thirst satisfied, dresses his feathers, and indulges in melodious leisure. These delicious hours — these

* See the Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne; by the Rev. Mr. White.

hours to the enjoyment of which all the rest of the day seems to minister, by providing food and sleep,—these hours you have already witnessed. Of our evening excursions you are at present a companion. The day is now hastening to a close. Satisfied with our feast, we shall repair, before the sun descends into the horizon, to the protecting woods. When the warmth of the sun begins to decrease, the air becomes gradually heavy, and inclines us to sleep. To this purpose, also, it is probable that the plants contribute, by respiring a somniferous ef-

fluvia. In darkness, the heaviness of which I speak is so extreme, that it is then painful to keep the eyes open. Thus has nature provided, by gentle means, that we should take the rest that is necessary for us during that period in which, to fulfil other parts of her design, the sun, the source of joy, is withdrawn. The night, then, we pass in slumbers ; and when the sparkling fires of day again vivify the world, the air loses its denseness, and we awake. We sit silent during a little time, till the coldness of the dawn gives way : at length, ‘ from his watch-

watch-tower in the sky,' the lark sounds the signal, and we take to our wings."

The Canary-Bird was delighted with this account, and lamented that he had never led this happy life. In reply, the yellow-hammer continued his description :

" I have already hinted that our lives have by no means that uniformity which appears to prevail in yours. I have not heard you speak of any part of it with that rapture which the gifts of nature inspire ; but neither have you told me that you experience the want of food in winter, or of

D 3

drink

drink in summer—that you are exposed to devouring birds, or to any other enemies. Now, with us, it sometimes happens that, severe frosts destroy our lives; and, frequently, in winter, we toil all day to procure, at last, only a scanty meal; and, the water being congealed, we are deprived of drink. It is true, however, that nature has adapted our wants to the seasons. We do not need the same quantity of sustenance in winter that is necessary for our support in summer; and as the moisture of our bodies is prevented, by the frigid air, from flying off by perspi-

perspiration, we do not require that supply of water, without which, in the heat of summer, we could not live. Add to this, the frost never continues long without snow, the flakes of which are easily melted. But notwithstanding all I have said, we should infallibly be in want, during the winter months, were it not that Providence, with the infinite wisdom which is conspicuous in all his works, has rendered by far the greater number of birds capable of crossing oceans and flying from one country to another, accompanying the car of summer, in whose presence
is

is always plenty. It is evident that the bodies of birds are constructed so as to fit them for seeking their food in places at a great distance from each other. If a quadruped were to seek this scattered food for his subsistence, he would be weary before he had filled his stomach. It is evident also, from the formation of birds, that the food intended for them is not always in one spot: to travel therefore with peculiar ease is a faculty but for which their lives could not be equally happy with those of other creatures. For this purpose, their bodies are small

small: now these small bodies, carried with velocity through the air, in atmospheres colder than that which surrounds quadrupeds, could not possibly retain their vital heat were they not provided with a warmer covering than hair — they are, therefore, provided with feathers. I have said this to shew that, all birds are formed for travelling. *Birds of passage* only exceed the rest in this capacity: instead of little migrations from one part of a country to another—from the highlands to the low—from the woods to the villages—in *birds of passage*, the place is enlarged

larged—the world is their country. The admirable contrivance of *birds of passage* may be seen more clearly, if we consider that, but for these the food produced in summer could not be consumed without the assistance of a number of birds so immense that, in winter, they must either subsist by making war upon every other part of creation; or, starving peaceably, cover the fields and shores with their dead. By rendering these birds migratory, consequences thus dreadful are avoided: instead of waiting the approach of summer, they constantly accompany

company that season, clear away from every country what is redundant, and leave it when their presence would distress its inhabitants."

You will pardon me, Melanthe, for making my birds talk thus philosophically.—I am by no means the first fabulist that has assisted animals to speak of their own condition. If you are pleased or informed by their speeches, I trust you will not trouble yourself to call in question the capacity of the speakers. No one will be in danger of believing that they ever said these words—unless there be those
that

that give credit to what Æsop relates of lions, wolves and frogs. A fabulist undertakes to amuse and instruct; and you must allow him to make use of a few imaginary circumstances which he does not expect you to believe.—I would have you suppose that the yellow-hammer went on, giving the Canary some account of the feathered tribes:—

“ But who the various nations can declare
That plough with busy wing the peopled air?
These cleave the crumbling bark for insect food;
Those dip the crooked beak in kindred blood;
Some haunt the rushy moor, the lonely woods;
Some bathe their silver plumage in the floods;
Some fly to man, his household gods implore,
And gather round his hospitable door,
Wait the known call, and find protection there,
From all the lesser tyrants of the air;

The

The tawny eagle seats his callow brood
High on the cliff, and feasts his young with blood:
On Snowden's rocks, or Orkney's wide domain,
Whose beetling cliffs o'erhang the western main,
The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms
Amid the gathering clouds and sullen storms.

MRS. BARBAULD.



CHAP. V.

Torva læna lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam;
Florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella.

VIRGIL. ECL. II.

The hungry lioness the wolf devours;
The wolf the kid; the kid the shrubs and flow'rs.

MANY birds had now assembled on the same spot with the Canary-Bird and yellow-hammer, all in pursuit of their evening fare. Among the rest, was a swallow, clinging to a ledge on the wall of a neighbouring cottage. Other swallows were
3 skimming

skimming about, in every direction. A hawk who, like the rest, was in search of his supper, darted suddenly upon one of these, and carried off his prize. All the birds were in the utmost consternation; but as the circumstance happened at some little distance, and as the hawk left the place almost as soon as he came, only a very few fled away. Our birds, and the swallow that I have mentioned, with many others, remained.

“Monster”, cried the swallow! “that such a wretch should live!—Eat swallows!—I shudder at the very thought!—

One would have imagined that the sight of so much beauty might have melted his hard heart—his crimson throat, his snowy breast, and back of deep splendid blue. Well, thank my stars, I shall never eat a swallow!—No—nor any other bird—he must have the palate of a very cannibal to relish such a feast!—independently of the cruelty of the deed. I should nauseate the dish.—”

At this moment, one of the scarabei, or beetle kind, flew along : after it darted the swallow; and the terrified insect, dashing itself, in hasty flight, against

against a tree, fell, and seemed incapable of attempting to avoid the danger with which its life was threatened. Its outer wings were of a brilliant verdigris-colour; and on each of these were sprinkled drops of gold; his head was coloured as his wings; his body covered with a shining corslet of grass-green; his legs seemed cased in foil of crimson-gold. The swallow, not at all seduced from his purpose by the sight of *so much beauty*, was about to swallow his prey—the fine colours of the insect no more inclined him to leave it, than the redness of an

E 3

apple,

apple, or the rosy softness of a peach, would induce you, Melanthe, to reject them; or than the rich feathers of a pheasant, or the whiteness of a chicken, will save either from being demolished.—The truth was, they made his mouth water in the expectation of a delicious morsel. He was about to swallow the beetle, when it cried out :

“ Ah, gigantic creature, in pity spare me ! I might call you a cruel monster : but I had rather soothe you with soft words :—yet, what so cruel as to eat a beetle ! ”

“ Stop,” cried the swallow—
“ though

“though you think it very cruel to eat a beetle, you eat *pucerons**. You eat what pleases you—I do no more—you feed upon flowers, and devour grain—all of which are as comely to look at as yourself.”—

“But consider,” interrupted the beetle, “that I am a living creature—and that as for *pucerons*—they are scarcely to be called such:—as an order of beings, they are totally insignificant;—in one point of view, only are they important;—that is, for the *single* purpose for which

* A little insect called, also, *vine-fretter*.

they

they are made: namely, my food."—

“This is vastly ridiculous,” answered the swallow, “as if *pucerons* were created specifically for such a creature as you! A creature who lives only to be fattened for swallows! I grant you are a living thing; but, infinitely low in the scale of beings when compared with swallows. What, shall a thing that I am born to eat be spoken of as on a level with me! What is your life?—during part of your time, you ripen under ground;—in another part, you go from flower to flower;—all within a small.

small space, and all for my use: your whole existence is a month or two, or, at most, a summer;—meanwhile, I am created to travel over all creation: I circle round the pyramids of Egypt; feast among the marshes of the Nile; visits the banks of the Euphrates; lodge upon the pagodas of the Bramins, and skim over the Ganges:—and all this is but a part of my existence—”

The swallow was going on, and would soon have proved himself a being of great importance; but, recollecting that it was mere loss of time to talk
to

to a beetle about the Euphrates, or the Bramins, he determined to settle the matter quickly ; and being desirous to shew his regard for justice, exclaimed “ you deserve to die for killing the *puceron*s.”—

Alas,” cried the beetle, “ I should never have eat the *puceron*s if I had not an inclination for them, given me by nature!—

“ Nor should I,” said the impatient swallow, “ nor should I eat *beetles* but that I have a natural inclination—in short—”—

“ In short,” said a wagtail, who was stalking over the mud of a pool—“ in short, my dear friend,

friend, swallow, the hawk would not eat *swallows*, but for much the same reason.”—

The mention of the hawk brought to the swallow's mind his late exclamations; and he could not but blush: “Friends” said he, “I perceive that it is wrong to load any creature with reproach for doing what nature has directed. I see that, in an enlarged point of view, a hawk is as innocent as a swallow. I see, too, that we are apt to congratulate ourselves upon exemption from the faults of others, while we are ourselves guilty of things, which, though different,
are

are equally wrong: one kills a swallow, another a beetle, and another a puceron."

Then, turning to the beetle, he said: "you eat pucerons, and meal, and suck the nectar of flowers, for your subsistence; and I eat beetles for mine. neither I nor you should be accused of cruelty; but as it would be barbarous in me to destroy you now in a deliberate manner, take your liberty, and farewell!"

This incident, Melanthe, taken as a fable, and as such I have invented it, will afford many lessons which you will yourself discover. My intention

was to point out a natural, as well as a moral, truth. I wished to show you that a prejudice against particular creatures, for fancied acts of cruelty is absurd:—to prove that all are innocent, I prove that all are guilty.



CHAP. VI.

How just the moral in this scene conveyed !
And what without a moral would we read ?

JAGO.

I HAVE heard a soldier say,
“ in your first battle you think
that you shall certainly be killed ; but, having escaped this,
you are under no apprehension
about your fate in any subsequent engagement.” It was thus
that, when the Canary-bird heard
a hawk was near him, he gave
up his life for lost ; and, (*scarce-*

ly

ly believed himself to be alive) long after the spoiler was gone. He lamented his folly in taking advantage of the unfastened door to extend the circumference of his range ; and began to think, with the *Pariâ* of *Saint Pierre*, that, “ the less the space we occupy, the more we are sheltered :” but when he recovered himself from his shock, he no longer regretted his enterprize. On the contrary, he encouraged himself by reflecting that, tho’ such a dashing, heedless, headlong creature as a swallow met with a fate which, indeed, was no more than might be expect-

ed ; yet, as it regarded himself, what with his general habits of decorum, and the peculiar circumspection which this accident would teach him to observe, there could be nothing to fear. “The danger,” said he, “is past : before I knew the figure of a hawk, and before I had been witness to his depredation, I might have been liable ; but I have survived the period of ignorance, and have reason to congratulate myself, that the momentous lesson has been inculcated upon me in so early a stage of my progress.”

While

While he was thus wrapping himself up in security, "A hawk! a hawk!" resounded in shrill cries of terror. Indebted to others, at last, for his only chance of escape, he fled, he knew not how nor where, but with a swiftness which nothing but fear could have enabled him to use. Still, however, the pursuer was close upon him, and every possibility of safety seemed to be at an end. At this critical moment, another bird, whom extreme terror threw into the way of the evil that he was endeavouring to avoid, crossed between the canary-bird and the

F 3 hawk.

hawk. The hawk seized this victim, and the canary-bird escaped. One might suppose that some pitying power, Mira herself, had interposed to save her favourite ; as Paris was snatched by Venus from the uplifted sword of Tydides.*

Now the canary-bird is safely lodged upon a tree, I trust, Melanthe, that you will not be sorry he has experienced this peril. It would have been to be regretted if, considering what he thought of the swallow's destruction, he had returned to his cage without undergoing

* Homer's Iliad.

some such alarm. He has now learned, that it is *possible* to fall into the hands of a hawk without being, in his own estimation, a peculiarly “heedless, headlong creature.” He will, in future, think more candidly. This story will be of use to others beside the canary-bird, if it teach any one that, evil may overwhelm his neighbour, though uninvited by error; or, if it teach a truth perhaps still more useful, and less frequently repeated, that error itself is not easily avoided; and may be committed by those who rely most upon the rectitude of their intention. There is no idea more dangerous than
that

that which leads us to imagine, that an evil action is always the consequence of previous inclination : for, under the influence of this supposition, we sit, like the Canary-bird, contemplating our security, till that useless moment in which the evil comes upon us.—A *useless* moment, because our strongest and best-intended efforts are then unavailing. We have no time to put our infallible plans of resistance into execution. We are contented to *escape* instead of *conquering*, as we proposed ; And even in escape, “ the race is not to the swift : ” --that our pride may
be

be completely subdued, we are not allowed to have the honor of effecting our own deliverance: but, as to the transit of a bird, in our fable, must owe all to the uncertain and seldom-exerted interference of some other cause.

Considerations of this kind are particularly to be recommended to the young. Books of history and biography are put into their hands: long catalogues of vices, and splendid instances of virtue. As they feel but *one* inclination, they suppose themselves *capable* of only *one* line of conduct: their hearts
glow

glow, then, while they anticipate the glorious career they have to run; acting over again, or surpassing the good actions of their ancestors. For the crimes that excite abhorrence and burning resentment, they attribute these to another class of human beings—to men who never felt as they do. Never once do they tremble, least they should one day be like the monsters they detest.—Ask them if they have any fears of this sort?—their high-spirited indignation will scarcely suffer them to give you so argumentative an answer as that of Naiboth :

“ Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing ? ”

Those

Those examples of human conduct are most useful, I apprehend, which show what crimes had been committed by those who were once the fairest examples

———“ of untainted youth,
“ Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth :” *

but these are not sufficient. Show them what sad alterations of this sort have happened, and they suppose that the man himself was changed ; that, by some supernatural influence perhaps, his warm heart was changed to one of stone ;—that, previous to this transmutation, he was all

* Pope.

virtue,

virtue, and now all vice. Let them be shown, then, what portion of goodness and of greatness may exist in a man's breast, even at that very period of his life in which he commits dreadful crimes : let them be shown how often virtuous feelings themselves lead their possessor into vice. These lessons will teach them the sum of moral philosophy : to look with candour on the conduct of others, and with humble caution on their own.

CHAP. VII.

From branch to branch, the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till even, nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.

MILTON.

SEPARATED from his guide,
the yellow-hammer, our Canary
felt himself, a second time, a
stranger in the world. He sat
panting for some minutes in the
cavity of an oak ; meanwhile, the
sun began to decline, and every
bird betook itself to rest. Un-
able

able, at first, and now fearful, to depart, it was long before he attempted, though much he wished, to change his place. Many times he spread his wings for flight; and, as often, drew back, relinquishing the design. Committing himself, at length, to the vast void of air, he rushed abroad with precipitation. Frightened by the sound of his own wings, and by every rustling leaf, he repented the temerity with which he had abandoned his hiding-place; and flew for refuge to the first tree that presented itself.

It was now the time of sleep;
and

and, drowsiness coming upon him, he gave up every thought of moving again before morning. He folded his head under his wing, and was lost in slumber. Here and there, upon the dry sandy banks, glow-worms hung their little lamps. Silence and darkness assumed the throne of nature.—In her hidden retreat, a nightingale sung this song:

Fays, that love the moony mead,
Immortal foes of evil deed,
Ne'er may your power, nor your pleasures cease!

If dear to you the pathless glade;
If you revere the solemn shade;
If the soft silver brook, that, gleaming far,
Spangles the grove with many a liquid star,
Has calm delights for you;
Or, evening's fragrant breeze, or, her refreshing dew;

If, as you trip along,
You hear, and prize, my plaintive song;
And if, to you, it seem,
Offspring of Fancy's playful'st dream!
Such scenes and sounds were made for gentle peace;

Incline a fav'ring ear—
My supplication hear;
And, with resistless charm,
Guard, guard these bow'rs, these sacred bow'rs, from
harm!



CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

One end of God in this visible creation, was, certainly, the delight of his creatures, of which the meanest reptile has undoubtedly its share.

BLAIR.

MORNING returned. The Canary-bird, cheered by the rising day, forgot the dangers of the preceding evening, and flew, without apprehension, wherever any pleasing object invited. It is not to be supposed that, the beauties of nature are

6 3

visible

visible to no other eyes than those of man. Birds would be liable to many inconveniences if they were not far-sighted. They must be able to comprehend a large scene, and to see objects at a distance clearly, otherwise they would often travel to no purpose. Many of the lesser charms of nature are peculiarly adapted, I apprehend, to the animal creation: such as the colours, spots and stripes upon seeds; and even the insect world seem to have been considered in the ornaments of flowers: particularly in the interior parts, some of which are
not

not visible to us until the flower is dissected, I shall not be blamed, therefore, for representing our Canary-Bird as enjoying the delights of morning, delights altogether new to him, who had hitherto lived in a cage. Among the places to which the little vagrant resorted, was an elegant garden, the property of a gentleman who took considerable pleasure in making his little domain the safe retreat of the feathered tribes.

Here, by great good fortune, the Canary-Bird found his first and only

only acquaintance, the yellow-hammer. "This garden," said he "is a spot in which we may abide with peculiar safety:—in general, I advise you to beware of gardens. Man-traps, and bird-traps, and spring-guns, and all sorts of guns, are very common there. If you have any value for your life, beware of gardens!

"My life!" exclaimed the Canary-Bird, who did not understand the first part of the speech, "My life! are any hawks *here*?"

"Not here" — returned the yellow-hammer, "I speak of gardens in general."—

"Let

“ Let us be gone, my dear friend, let us be gone!”—

“ Happily,” said the yellow-hammer, dryly, “ these sort of hawks have no wings.—In truth, I mean *men*.

“ Men!” cried the other! why men are pleased with our singing.”—

“ Yes—but not with our eating.”

“ Bless me, said the Canary-Bird, my mistress is never so happy as when I eat!”

“ Excuse me,” replied the yellow-hammer, “ your case is different from ours. Mankind likes nothing that is not dependent upon
it.

it. Men would create worlds, if they could, for the sole purpose of decking them with beauty, and filling them with happy creatures: but, for want of sufficient wisdom, they would soon render them miserable. Incapable of extending their ambition, thus far, they attempt to rule in smaller spheres. You are one of *their* creatures—your cage is a world of *theirs*—they can starve you, and they can surround you with plenty, *therefore* they *love* you. For us, who are totally independent of them, they have little regard. Some few they prize for their beauty;

beauty; but, in general, those that they do not eat, they stigmatize as useless. This is so far from being true that, the extinction of a single species of birds, would derange the economy of the world. The same assertion is true of every other description of creatures, nay of plants, and all the parts of creation. Nothing is made in vain. Birds protect grain and vegetables in a much greater degree than they injure either, by destroying myriads of insects, whose depredations are less complained of, because they are less seen. The refined part of mankind, however,

however, are always the friends of Nature. The owner of this garden delights to see and hear us. He is now approaching--- you need not fly away : listen to what he says :

I.

" Again the balmy zephyrs blows;
" Fresh verdure decks the grove :
" Each bird with vernal rapture glows,
" And tunes his notes to love.

II.

" Ye gentle warblers hither fly
" And shun the noon-tide heat :
" My shrubs a cooling shade supply,
" My bowers a safe retreat.

III.

" Here, freely hop from spray to spray,
" Or weave the mossy nest ;
" Here rove and sing the livelong day,
" At night, here sweetly rest.

IV.

" Amid this clear translucent rill
" That trickles down the glade,
" Here bathe your plumes, here drink your fill,
" And revel in the shade.

" No

V.

- " No school-boy rude, to mischief prone
" E'er shews his ruddy face;
" Or twangs his bow, or hurls a stone,
" In this sequestered place.

VI.

- " Hither the vocal thrush repairs,
" Secure the linnet sings;
" The goldfinch dreads no slimy snare
" To clog her painted wings.

VII.

- " Sad Philomel! ah quit thy haunt,
" Your distant woods among;
" And round my friendly grottos chaunt
" Thy sweetly plaintive song.

VIII.

- " Let not the harmless red-breast fear,
" Domestic bird! to come
" And seek a sure asylum here
" With one who loves his home.

IX.

- " My trees for you, ye artless tribe,
" Shall store of fruit preserve:
" Oh, let me thus your friendship bribe!
" Come, feed without reserve.

X.

" For you, these cherries I protect,

" To you these plums belong :

" Sweet is the fruit that you have peck't,

" But sweeter far your song.

XI.

" Let, then, this league betwixt us made

" Our mutual interests guard;

" Mine be the gift of fruit and shade;

" Your songs be my reward!" *

* Invitation to the Feathered Race, by the Reverend
Mr. Graves.



CHAP. IX.

Again I'll listen to your grave debates;
I'll think I hear your various maxims told.

JACO.

“PRAY,” said the Canary to the yellow-hammer, “what hollow shouting cry was that which, every now and then, resounded through the woods last night?”

“Truly, cousin,” said the other, “I ought to have asked how you slept? but, really, I forgot the novelty of your situation. — The voice you heard

H 2

was

was that of an owl.—This is a bird whom you not very likely to see : for he seldom comes abroad before others are asleep.”

“ Indeed,” chirped the Canary-Bird, “ what can be his motive for such a practice as that ?”

“ I am scarcely able to say,” returned the yellow-hammer : “ night, no doubt, has some charms, though we creatures of the day do not admire them. In that season, there are flowers that blow ; birds that sing ; stars in the heavens ; and luminous insects upon earth ; so that night is not altogether forsaken. But
though

though I cannot, with any degree of certainty, relate to you the owl's reason for choosing night, I could repeat many accounts that have been invented by one person or another, to ascertain the cause of his avoiding day. Among the rest, we have a tradition that, once upon a time, an owl, unable to sleep, endeavoured to while away the night with a song. He had no other companion than echo. Echo is of a timid servile nature: It is never to be seen; never ventures to speak but while another is talking; so that a few faint words

continued a moment longer than the voice of the principal speaker, are all that you can hear. But the most curious circumstance is, that echo is sure to say as you say.—Well—this, says the story, this was the best companion in the world for the owl. They agreed upon every subject.” “To what cause,” said the owl, at the end of his song, “to what cause ought the silence which prevails in the woods to be attributed, if it be not to favor my melody? Surely, the groves are charmed with my voice; and when I sing, all nature listens!”

“All

“All nature listens,” repeated echo !

“The nightingale,” continued the owl, “usurps my right : his voice is musical, to be sure ; but mine is much sweeter—”

“Sweeter,” cried echo, with as much rapture as the owl !

“Encouraged by the applauses of his companion, the owl, after refreshing himself with a short sleep, rose, fully determined to take a distinguished part in the concert of the morning. Sailing, therefore, across a field or two, he arrived among a group of various birds. Owls, till this period, the tale informs us, had
always

always been respected in their way, but never regarded as songsters : this unlucky fellow, however, burst into the assembly singing, as he insisted, in a most outrageous manner. All the birds laughed at the attempt. For some time, he mistook derision for applause : but, at length, discovering the ridicule that was cast upon him, he retired with the utmost contempt for the taste of his hearers. Through picque, he and his descendants have ever since avoided our society, and delighted in no other companion than echo."

As

As I have already cautioned you, Melanthe, not to entertain a prejudice against any animal on account of its natural habits, I trust that you will remove the satire of this story from the owl, and place it upon that human character which it more faithfully describes. There are persons weak enough to be tempted by the praises of those who have no judgment of their own, to expose themselves by endeavouring to exhibit accomplishments in which they have little skill. There are others so mean as to prefer the society of those who flatter their vanity.

Both

Both these descriptions of people become ridiculous whenever they venture among those of sense : but, as want of understanding was the cause of their first error, the same misfortune leads them into more. It is long before the conceited perceive that they are disapproved ; and if, at last, they discover this, they never impute the fault to themselves. They conceive a hatred toward that society which, alone, could improve their taste ; and delight in none but those who, by applauding, confirm their dulness.

These

These are evils which young people should be particularly cautious to avoid. Nothing is more dangerous than to chuse your principal companions among those whose fortunes or understandings are considerably beneath your own; and yet there are so many temptations to do so, that it is necessary to be much upon your guard. It is seducingly pleasant to find a friend who applauds all you say, listens to you with eagerness, enters into all your humours—will move when you are idle—is for play when you would play, and ready to sit down when you are tired.

It

It is pleasant, but it is *dangerous*. It so weakens you, that you cannot, afterward, bear the fatigue of arriving at excellence ; you never *know* what excellence is ; you never *attempt*, therefore, to reach it ; you are impatient of contradiction ; you cannot give way to the humours of others : you are unfit for the company of your equals : you shrink away, and are condemned to nothingness for life.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

————— It wins my admiration
To view the structure of that little work,
A bird's-nest. Mark it well within, without:
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join : his little beak was all,
And yet how neatly finished! What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years apprenticeship to boot,
Could make me such another?

PROFESSOR HURDIS—IN THE VILLAGE CURATE.

LEAVING the garden, and joining various other birds, our Canary fell into a twittering conversation with a chaffinch. This rosy-breasted bird was in quest of food to carry home to the
I nest.

nest. He would have staid longer, but that he was impatient to carry the young their breakfast; and their mother was waiting with them for his return. The Canary-Bird was much charmed with the expressions of tenderness which he used upon this occasion. A bird's-nest in a hedge was a perfect novelty to the Canary. The chaffinch invited him to visit his dwelling. Here he found four young ones, who, with open mouths, expressed their joy at the arrival of their parent. The chaffinch spread before them the provision that he had found; and

and on this, with their mother's nelp, they feasted. The Canary admired the ingenuity with which the nest had been put together. The moss so finely assorted, the harsh materials that were placed on the outer side, and the soft feathers that lined it within. The chaffinch, now, seated on an opposite spray, sung the following song :

I.

Cheer up, cheer up, behold the day,
Glads all the fields with golden ray !
Cheer up, cheer up, my pretty sweetings !
Happy like this be all our meetings !

II.

O, never may my anxious breast,
Returning, find an empty nest !
Sleep, little dear ones, safe from harm,
Safe from noise, and rude alarm !

III.

May no idle thoughtless boy
Rob me of my dearest joy !
O, guarded be this little shade,
Wherein my fondest hopes are laid !

IV.

And be *my* life protected, too,
That I may live to nourish *you* !
Let me see my darlings fly—
Then, gunner, if you will, I die !—

V.

Cheer, up, cheer up, behold the day
Glad all the fields with golden ray !
Cheer up, cheer up, my pretty sweetings !
Happy like this be all our meetings !



CHAP. XI.

The common air, the sun, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.

ODE TO VICISSITUDE, BY GRAY AND MASON.

BY the incidents related in the former chapters, our Canary's attention was diverted, from the moment of his escape till near noon on the following day. When he left his cage, he had no idea that he was leaving Mira.

III.

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Rob me of my dearest joy !
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Mira: the door was half open;—he peeped ;—descended from his perch;—wondered at the novel circumstance;—eyed the vast range before him with side-long looks;—and resolved to venture where fortune invited. Not then, heedless creature! not then, did he consider whether he should remain within the reach of his attentive mistress! And while the fields were new, while delights presented themselves in distracting multiplicity, he might have been excused if he had suffered a temporary forgetfulness to possess him: he might—indeed, he might:—but, in truth, he

he frequently wondered that no change of place brought him to Mira. It may seem remarkable, but he had no inclination to be confined to his cage again: on the other hand, he did not dread the idea of entering it, now and then. He wished that the door might be always open; and nothing in future prevent his resorting to the woods whenever he pleased. He had no apprehension of cold weather; he rejoiced in the present sun-shine, and imagined that it would always last.

These reflections were made among the woodbine that perfumed

fumed a bower. Happening to look down, he perceived that there were seated in it two young ladies. One of these held a book, and, after a few moments, began to read a little tale, which shall be recited in the next chapter.



CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Hapless the land that rav'ning foes invade.

THE sequestered cottage, to which the woes of war had driven Bertha, and her daughter Ella, lost its gloom while the soul-soothing harp uttered its sweet sounds beneath the roof. Bertha, during the life of her husband, had lived in affluence; and,

and, in that situation, had acquired all the refinement of the period in which she lived.— This period was that in which England was the continual prey of the rapacious Danes ; who, from time to time, harrassed its shores with invasion, and even outraged its fields with pillage and massacre. These foreign robbers had now attained so high a pitch of success, that Alfred the Great was obliged to shelter himself by concealment, and to subsist by means of the humblest occupations. Released, at length, from these, he associated with a party of nobles,

nobles, his adherents, and formed a retreat among the marshes in Somersetshire, where the Parret and the Thone unite. Meanwhile, the whole kingdom suffered the most dreadful devastations.

In these distracted times, Bertha, whose husband had already fallen in an attempt to preserve his country from the Danes, retired with her daughter, a child of ten or twelve years of age, to a clay cottage, in an unfrequented part of the country.

Egbert was a shepherd's boy, who watched his flock in the neighbourhood of Bertha. —

Chancø

Chance had introduced him to her dwelling; and, whenever he could graze his sheep upon the heath near the edge of which the cottage stood, he did not fail to visit its solitary tenants. Egbert was such as the poet has described in these discriminative lines :

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy :
 Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye,
 Dainties he heeded not, nor gawd, nor toy,
 Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy ;
 Silent when glad ; affectionate though shy ;
 Sometimes his look was most demurely sad,
 And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why ;
 The neighbours stared, and sighed, yet blessed the
 lad ;
 Some thought him wonderous wise, and some believed
 him mad.

BEATTIE.

One day Egbert came, and
 Ella played upon her harp.—

It was a pretty ornamented harp—a relic of more fortunate days—a little battered—the flowers that were painted on it had certainly lost something of their colour—but, battered and faded as it was, the desolate walls to which it hung did but ill become it:—that was no matter—it told the story of its mistresses admirably well.

Ella sung to her harp a little Saxon song.—Alfred wrote many of these ; and his example rendered the love of them prevalent. They contained little stories, fables, and pithy sentiments of virtue, well calculated

to arrest the attention of an uncultivated people. Alfred knew that the darkness of barbarism yields to nothing more readily than to 'the light of the song.' His own greatness, indeed, is attributed to the poems which he read in his youth; and the experience of mankind has always supported this maxim of Shakespeare :

" Much is the force of heaven-bred poesy."

Egbert's sheep stray onward :
he must needs follow them; or,
at least, stop their progress ;
Ella looks to her mother for
consent while she proposes ta-
king her harp, and accompany-
ing

ing the shepherd to a small distance from their abode.

The sheep scatter themselves in the valley; Egbert and Ella walk slowly by the side of a winding brook, beneath the shade of willows; Ella touches her instrument; while Egbert gathers flowers, pink flowers from tall stems, that bloom on the water's edge, and meadow-sweet, of a creamy white, to braid the little harper's hat.

The time flies swiftly; and, one song after another, they stray farther than they intended. The brown fallows glow in the evening beams, as Egbert leads

his flock to the fold : he turns back with Ella, to accompany her to her mother's cottage.

They reach the brook where Ella sung ; and where Egbert gathered the flowers that are now drooping in her hat.

What sensations possess them when they find the bridge of planks torn up ; and behold, headlong among the rushes, the body of a youth, covered with wounds ! — He has died, no doubt, in defending the village-pass against the plundering Danes ! To ford the brook is impracticable ; the destruction of a neighbouring flood-gate has swelled

swelled its stream ; it rushes along with velocity ; it inundates the meadows. Darkness is fast approaching. They hear, as they imagine, distant shrieks of distress, mingled with shouts of exultation ; and they see—or, does their terrified fancy mislead them !—they see smoke, as of burning cottages, ascending ;—or—it may be the white mist of evening.

They are obliged to retrace a considerable number of their steps, and to take a long circuitous course to the cottage of Bertha. Delay could never have been more dreadful ; for calamity,

mity, it is but too evident, has befallen the country about; but how far it has extended, or what victims have suffered, who can tell?

Egbert and Ella pursue their way in almost uninterrupted silence. They cannot impart their apprehensions to each other. Night involves them in darkness; and it is long e'er they reach the cottage;—alas! what is that cottage?—a little scattered heap of rubbish!

“Mother!—mother!—” cries the distracted Ella.

No voice replies. Night in all its silence prevails.

Egbert's

Egbert's dog, who is familiar with the dwelling and its inhabitants, howls, and rakes anxiously among the ruins; Ella stands in mute unutterable affliction; Egbert lifts, incessantly, his sheep-hook, in the attitude of attack, imprecating vengeance on the destroyers; the dog continues to scratch away the rubbish, till digging up a torn kerchief, he brings it to the feet of the bewildered mourners, Ella receives it with enthusiasm: it is her mother's.

After remaining motionless a considerable time, Ella wanders on, and Egbert follows: Egbert
must

must return to his master ;—for Ella—she has no shelter, no home, no mother ; weary already, and unnerved by sorrow, it is impossible to her to walk so far as, even, the first house—if any house has been left standing by the enemy.—

The distressed pair walk together, till Ella, unable to support herself, notwithstanding the assistance of Egbert, resolves to throw herself on the floor of a cave that presents itself by the way side. The sagacious dog perceives her danger, and her defenceless state ; he suffers his master, for the first time, to depart
alone

alone; he remains to protect Ella. Egbert reluctantly leaves her in so dreary and hazardous a situation; but the hope of obtaining assistance encourages him to hasten onward:

Ella sits weeping: "why did I leave my mother," she exclaims, uttering, with sobs, words half articulate! "Cruel destiny, that permitted me to go!"

The dog raising his feet upon her shoulder, endeavours to assuage her grief with soothing moans; he presses his nose against her cheek, and quietly licks her face; he takes part in her

her misfortunes; he does all but speak:

Ella and the dog shiver in the chill air of night; the welkin is obscured by clouds; the stars disappear; an incessant rustling is heard from among the trees; a drizzling rain descends; and Ella is but half sheltered by the cave. The dog lies close to Ella; they mutually seek to keep each other warm; but, now, the sheltered space is so small that there is not room for both; Ella takes the dog into her lap; her tears fall upon him;—wet, and cold, hungry, weary, drowsy, her teeth chatter

ter; she draws her arms to her sides; covers her face with her hands; fearful of exposing any sheltered part to the cold, she sits motionless; exhausted nature sinks into a sleep.—

Poor miserable girl! the horrors from a share of which she was preserved in the morning, present themselves to her imagination. She sees the solitary cottage surrounded by Danes; the barbarians are not content with taking what may be of use to themselves, but, foes of civilisation, they throw down the hut itself; it falls, overwhelming the flowers of the little garden.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile, her defenceless mother is dragged away: "My child! my child!" she cries, "what will become of my child! where has she wandered? God save her from these murderers!" The throng and noise redoubles to the fancy of Ella. A furious Dane, lifting his massy axe, aims a blow at Bertha;—the dog, she thinks, rushes upon him;—she cries out: "Man, spare my mother!"

She is awake; the dog has left her lap; a riotous banditti are advancing; they perceive Ella, dimly, by twilight; and to destroy

stroy every thing is their occupation.

A ruffian attempts to seize Ella; the dog tears him to the ground; his companions come to his assistance, and Ella is in their hands. Undaunted by numbers, fearless of weapons, the dog still flies on him that detains Ella; but unavailing are his gallant efforts—

Egbert returns, and with him are two peasants; the Danes are attacked; they fly; Ella is released.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTINUATION OF

THE COTTAGE OF BERTHA.

IT is at some distance from the cave that the lovely, little, scarcely-living Ella is rescued from the spoilers.

It was long before Egbert could descry a single creature on his way. At length, he found two men armed in their defence: these had returned with him

him to carry Ella into shelter; providentially, they came to save her. They cannot give any account of her mother; they bid her hope that she is yet alive, and will soon be found. They bear her to a cottage.

They are not followed by the dog; but they do not perceive his absence. He, wounded in his lungs, lies panting before the mouth of the cave, unable to rise.

Joy overcomes the agony that he suffers, when he sees the unfortunate Ella delivered from the Danes; he rejoices, too, in the sight of his master; he does not

envy the victors the honour of the deed; he is satisfied that it is done, and that he made one in the attempt.

But now Ella and Egbert disappear; the anguish of his wounds returns; he attempts to rise and follow; it is in vain he tries; he breathes painfully; he bleeds to death; languor succeeds agony; numb insensibility seizes his nerves; he is easier than before; he finds it possible to move.

In misery, he drags one foot after another; sometimes falling down, unable to proceed; still, anxious to reach his master, he
pursues

pursues his way slowly and at intervals. Soon, fatigue overcomes him; noon advances before he has traversed half the ground; the sun increases his faintness; he despairs of arriving—yet resumes his efforts: he gains the well known door; he drops; his master, already lamenting his absence, and fearful of his fate, appears; he takes him in his arms; pities and caresses him; happy reward of his pilgrimage! Before the shrine of his affections, he lies down satisfied! he murmurs not at the sufferings through which he has gained the spot—

all is well—the fatigue is past—
 pain ceases—a gentle lulling sen-
 sation steals throughout his
 frame—all that he wished is
 granted; he sleeps, never to re-
 vive.



his pilgrimage! Before the
 shrine of his affection, he lies
 down satisfied! he murmurs
 not at the sufferings through
 which he has gained the spot—
 all

CHAP. XIV.

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stories, and good in every thing.

SHAKESPEARE!

THE Story that has occupied the last two chapters would have been continued in the present, had not their dinner-bell summoned the ladies from the arbour. It was not without reluctance that they closed the book; they were half inclined to take

take a glance at the conclusion, and just discover what became of Ella? and what was the fate of Bertha? but a special message hastened them, while they were turning over the leaves; and so the whole was left, for the present, undecided.

The ladies and their book reminded the Canary-Bird of the scenes to which he had been accustomed; he thought of his mistress, and (let it not be doubted) sighed. We left him, indeed, in somewhat of this humour; and let it be remembered that, early impressions are strong. The woods sincerely delighted him; the

the vast irregular charms of nature filled him with rapture ; he fancied that he felt the whole fascinating force of their beauty : but, now, that the picture of domestic life is presented to him, the secret, habitual, predominating disposition of his mind manifests itself in all its power ; he longs for the toilet, the wax lights, the evening serenade. He was confirmed in this inclination by various pieces of information which he gathered from his sylvan acquaintance. He heard melancholy stories of plundered birds' nests, and starving families of orphaned young ;
he

he found that, though certain readers could sigh, and weep, perchance, at the ruined cottage of Bertha, they could play the Danes themselves, and with excellent gusto! upon a bird's nest that the next green hedge contained. He learned that there are (or were) boys who think no more of birds eggs than they do of marbles; and who, spite of Esop's story of the frogs, never trouble themselves to inquire whether what is sport to them be not death—or misery, which is a hundred times worse than death—to others? He discovered, too, that there are, or
ed have

have been, those who could pity Ella without a shelter, and bereft of a mother; and yet feel no compassion for any other creature whom they place in a similar situation. Well, Melanthe, let them exult in their power, and sneer at rebuke; but let them know that, the precepts, the sentiments, and the examples of the greatest and best of men are against them.

Nor was it only the thoughtless persecutions of mankind that, in his apprehension, took greatly from the blessings of the groves. He had been used to a regular kind of life, with food
always

always before his eyes;—and water too, when he chose to turn them that way—no care—no solicitude; it was a considerable mortification to one of his indolent habits to hear that such a sort of flies were to be found in this place;—a clump of groundsel in that;—hips and haws in another;—chickweed in a fourth;—and, what was still worse, there was little certainty of finding a meal to-day, where a feast had presented itself yesterday.—“That is disagreeable indeed,” cried the Canary-Bird—“for if this be the case one may fly about a great deal to no purpose.”

pose." But, notwithstanding this acute speech, 'tis a hundred to one that he had gained a thorough insight of the matter, had he not experienced a fact of the sort.

There was a garden in a certain place (so much at least, may be depended upon for truth) whither various birds, and the Canary - Bird among the rest, made frequent resort. This garden was covered, walks and all, with fruitful weeds. In this situation things stood, when the midsummer holidays commenced. Released by this auspicious reason, like ice by the summer-

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giving

giving sun, away rush whole torrents of scholars; and, confined no longer to their usual banks, they overspread the country. Among these a brother and sister arrived within the precincts of our flowery, fruitful garden. Scarcely had they reached it half an hour, before its walks were trod seventeen times round, at least; its bounds explored; and, I had almost said, its very flowers numbered. Our young visitors are shocked at the woeful condition of the charming place. This must not be. To-morrow—(an appointment is made)—to-morrow—the

the whole shall be reformed: the red gravel shall shew itself in all its lustre; the mould in all its cheerful blackness; the favoured plants in all their regularity,

By four o'clock, accordingly, the gardeners arise, and go eagerly to work. It were a task far above my crude composition to sing the havock of the morn; there, purple thistles fall, and, in their wide ruin, involve plants of less aspiring growth; there, torn by the roots, lay mallows, feathered, groundsel, shepherd's purse with its heart-shaped pods, white orchis, golden dandelion,

and a hundred more, that had not even the honor of being observed. What time the sunbeams peeped over the garden wall, the feat was half accomplished; and, 'ere long, the whole appeared a withering heap. Meanwhile, some favorites of fortune, stocks, pinks and tulips, survive the wreck—save here and there one, who falls a victim to the hasty zeal with which his wild companion are overthrown.

It was now, as fable says, that the plants which were preserved looked with disdainful eye upon those that were cut down:

“Behold

“Behold,” said they, these worthless weeds! Mark, with what care we garden-flowers are kept! These are cast upon the dunghill, these are trodden under foot, while we are preserved with solicitude. See the end of their existence!”

The hapless wild-flowers, with modest dignity, replied: “Do not believe our existence destroyed; nor, that existence worthless. Some whom you now insult have still their roots or seeds remaining: these the dew of heaven will rear again in vigour. We leave to you the nicely levelled garden without
 M 3 regret:

regret : blossom you to gratify
the wealthy ; breathe your
odours to please the serene and
happy : be it ours, beside the pub-
lic path, and on the solitary
waste, to bless the senses of the
weary, and to cheer the sorrow-
ful ; to us let disease repair for
renovated health ; to us the
sweet-warbling birds for suste-
nance. Farewell, vain plants !
for you let the inconstant hand
of man provide a station : to
prosper us, the sun, the rain,
the winds, unite ! The favours
of man varies ; but the gifts of
nature are eternal !”

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Why grieve, if others in their turn are blest?

WELL—at last, the garden is cleared; but not till after apronful and armsful of its superfluous furniture have been carried out. Now, with nettle-stung, tingling arms and ancles, and red faces, the delighted pair sit down to breakfast. Loudly, they tell what changes they have wrought; what

what evils overcome; what discoveries they have made. They scorn to waste the hours; they resume their work; the borders are raked; the walks rolled; and ten brimming watering pots deluge all the place.—Pleasure itself is labor;—even gardening tires; the enterprising cultivators retreat.

Presently, our birds arrive, to enjoy the usual viands. What disappointment overwhelms them, when they perceive the alterations that have taken place! The Canary-Bird is particularly chagrined!

For

For the rest, they bore the matter with much composure, and set out in pursuit of a new banqueting-place. Before they departed, however, there arrived some other birds, who found the richest fare upon the new-turned earth. These were fond of the insects of which the soil was full. From the satisfaction they expressed, the Canary-Bird perceived that, what *he* had regarded as a *universal* misfortune was in fact, a blessing to others. He no longer regretted the circumstance; because none but selfish considerations could make that appear

appear to be an evil in which so many individuals rejoiced.

Having picked up sufficient refreshment on his way, he sought again the bower where the Cottage of Bertha had been read. He lost this morning, accidentally, the company of the yellow-hammer; a circumstance that left him at full liberty to indulge his partiality for cultivated scenes.

Among the honey-suckle that flaunted over the bower, in full sunshine, he dressed his feathers, and sung one of his sweetest songs. He had not been in this place long, however, before the
young

young ladies resumed their seats, and began to read the conclusion of their story. We shall withdraw our eyes and attention from the Canary-Bird, while we repeat, in the next chapter, what was read in the bower with much pleasure.



CHAP. XVI.

CONCLUSION OF

THE COTTAGE OF BERTHA.

THE wives of the peasants receive, with compassion and welcome, the shelterless Ella. To these poor people, Egbert commits the charge of his beloved companion.

All the country round is alarmed by the incursion of the Danes : the husbandmen remove their stock from the threatened neigh-

neighbourhood; all, that can be spared from the fold and the dairy, resort to arms; Egbert, who dreaded a command to retire with his flocks to some distance, and thus wholly to abandon Ella, gladly joins those who unite to protect their country.

At midnight, report is heard that the neighbouring village is attacked; thither the rustic soldiers haste; who so eager as Egbert? there the afflicted Ella is lodged!

Alas, unfortunate Ella! alas, unhappy Egbert! he sees the peasant that protected her, killed by two ferocious Danes; he sees

N

the

the cottage in flames; and now, Ella is torn away, a prisoner of the robbers!

The battle becomes general; the Danes fly; shouts of success resound; but Egbert enjoys no victory; the retreating Danes carry with them Ella.

The pillage and the prisoners are brought before the Danish chief; Ella is sent into confinement; within a large cavern she finds herself surrounded by numbers of miserable wretches, who, like herself, have fallen into the hands of the Danes.

While she is overwhelmed with confusion, apprehension, and

and horror, a voice, a well known voice, salutes her ears, and she is embraced by her lost mother !—" O, joy, joy !" she exclaims; her mother weeps: " thanks to the ravaging Danes," cries the enraptured Ella, " they have brought me to you !"

" O, my dear child—O, would to God they had not ! —I should have died in hope !—" exclaims the despairing mother.

" They will not kill us, mother, sure; but, if they do, they will kill us together, and that is what I wished !"

" My child,—my child,—they will sacrifice you to their idols ! —All whom you see are kept,

for an oblation to the fatal sisters ;
—to night, O, my poor child!—
to night the barbarous sacrifice
is to be made—hark!—that
noise proclaims the commence-
ment of the orgies!—all possi-
bility of deliverance is vanished!”

A rumour runs through the
place ; it says that, the Danes,
in the utmost consternation, are
striking their camp, and pre-
paring to fly ; no sacrifice is to
be made!

Ah! what stifling joy, what
tears, what shouts, what gestures!
Some throw up their hands to-
ward heaven ; some sink life-
less upon the earth ; and now
the

the entrance of the cave is opened; every heart exults—

Barbarous Danes! unable longer to detain their prisoners, they resolve upon a general massacre!—Farewell, to joy, to liberty and life;—O heart-rending reverse!

Hark!—what exceeding clamour is without! what loud huzzas! what joyful cries!—Inhuman Danes! is the death of your prisoners your sport?

O, joy, joy indeed!—It is the Britons that shout; the Danes have fled; the prisoners are free!

Who leads on this glorious band? Who has saved these crowds from death? — The shepherd, Egbert! Distinguished by his valour, Alfred, who has already destroyed the main body of the Danes, has given him this command. Bertha and Ella are saved by Egbert; and they love one another their whole lives long.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads,
 His orient beams, on herb, tree fruit, and flower
 Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
 After soft show'rs; and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful ev'ning mild; then silent night,
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
 And these the gems of heav'n, her starry train:
 But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
 On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flow'r
 Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after show'rs;
 Nor grateful ev'ning mild; nor silent night,
 With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon
 Or glitt'ring star-light, without thee is sweet.

MILTON.

THE Canary-Bird sincerely desires to be restored to his mistress. He determines to find, if possible, the cage that he has left. He flies through the garden, anxiously searching the place; he knows not that he is

at the distance of a mile, at least, from Mira's dwelling. He perceives a house in the garden; imagines that there he shall find his cage; and thither he wings his way. He arrives at one of the windows, and there discovers a cage, which he mistakes for his own;—but, with much surprise, perceives that, it is inhabited by another bird! He fears that Mira has bestowed the dwelling upon a new favorite. He addresses himself to the fortunate bird; the information that he gains perplexes him, but does not remove his apprehensions; and resting upon the
sill

sill of the window, he sings: He tells his mistress that, by some strange accident, he left his cage; but never intended to leave her; that the life he has led were delightful, if it might be enjoyed in her presence; but that, wanting her, it wants, to him, the greatest charm; he intreats her to receive him again; and, if he has offended, to be pardoned.

While he thus sings, Portia, to whose apartment he has, in reality, rambled, perceives the exotic bird. A circumstance so unusual engages her attention: "Poor creature," she says, what

what will become of a Canary-Bird in the fields! it will be starved to death! If it be able to find food, and to endure the air, winter, nay, the frosts of autumn, will infallibly destroy it; I wish it were possible to preserve him."

She is advised to place an empty cage at the window; the bird, they tell her, will infallibly enter.

The Canary-Bird who, from a beautiful sycamore, observes all, prepares to visit the cage as soon as it is left. He alights upon its top, and, twittering to the other Canary, inquires if he may
take

take possession without offence?
The courteous Canary bids him
heartily welcome. The wan-
derer waits no longer, but hops
upon the perch.



CHAP. XVIII.

Adieu ye groves ! adieu ye plains !
The wiry house once more he gains !

Portia returns, and the cage-door is fastened. She surveys her prize with pleasure; congratulates him on his arrival in shelter; and promises to take care of him. The Canary feels much obliged to her, but is disappointed

appointed that no Mira appears.

While Portia is felicitating herself upon the fortunate acquisition she has made; admiring the beauties of the bird; and rejoicing that they are in her possession, some one observes that Mira has lost her bird, and that, this either very much resembles it, or is the same.

“Most probably it is the same,” cries Portia; “and I wish so with all my heart!

The truth was, Mira, upon some trifling occasion, had behaved improperly to Portia; and these young ladies had never

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seen

seen each other since: Portia felt, therefore, the greatest pleasure in having this opportunity of bringing about a reconciliation. Being now positively convinced that this bird belongs to Mira, she resolves to restore it to her immediately. The Canary-Bird twitters on the way, thanking the good Portia for her design.

Mira receives with some confusion this favor from her injured friend. She admires the elevation with which Portia overcomes their former little animosities; loves her more than ever; and feels that, those
who

who injure us are best reclaimed
by acts of kindness.

The Canary-Bird is all rapture
upon this occasion. Transport-
ed with joy when he beheld
himself in the possession of Mira,
and happy to sit again upon the
perch of his own cage, he had
scarcely reached it before he
sung a strain which I shall thus
interpret :

Thro' shady groves, thro' flow'ry fields,
I've prov'd the joys that nature yields;
But; absent thou, forlorn I stray;
I scarcely heed the beauteous way;
For, thou not there, Ah! what, to me,
With Mira may compared be!
Not shady groves, nor flow'ry fields,
Nor all the joys that nature yields!

Sweet is the woodbine's honied breath,
And sweet the many-blossom'd heath;

Sweet the lark's carol, sweet the song
That floats the evening breeze along;
Blest are these charms!—but not, to me,
With Mira to compared be!—
No, nor the shade of groves, nor flow'ry fields,
Nor all the living joys that bounteous nature yields.!



NOTE.

IN the thirteenth chapter, the author has written of Egbert's dog with some reference to the fate of his own. KEEPER, the fictitious Travels of whom may have fallen into the hands of the reader *, as if to verify the tale, went out in search of his master, and returned wounded by, as it appeared, the thrust of a bayonet. On the closing page of this book, permit that "master" to inscribe the following memorial:—

SECOND OF AUGUST, 1799,
TRAVELLING ALONE,
TO SEEK HIS ABSENT MASTER,
KEEPER
RECEIVED,
FROM SOME IDLE HAND,
A DEEP AND MORTAL WOUND;
FAINTING WITH LOSS OF BLOOD,
INJURED IN HIS LUNGS,
AND
OPPRESSED WITH WEARINESS
AND THE MERIDIAN SUN,
HE REACHED HOME AT LAST,
FOUND THE FRIEND HE SOUGHT,

* "Keeper's Travels in Search of his Master," published by E. NEWBERRY.

SUNK AT HIS FEET,
AND
DIED.

THE LIFE
OF THIS DOG
WAS AN EXAMPLE
OF
ANIMAL MERIT;
HIS DEATH
OF
HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

READER,
UNBLAMED,
LAMENT HIS LOSS;
BUT,
LET NO DESIRE OF REVENGE
DISTURB THY BOSOM:
FOR
REMEMBER,
THE CRUEL ARE ALREADY MISERABLE.



J. Cundee, Printer, Ivy Lane.

